(b) if so, the status of the sanction, total amount, the estimated cost and the feasibility report, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) Preliminary Engg.-cum-Traffic survey for a new BG rail line from Dangri to Saikhowaghat (Dhola) has been completed in Nov. 2000. As per the survey report, the cost of construction of this 5.683 km. long line has been assessed as Rs. 15.37 cr. with a negative rate of return. In view of the unremunerative nature of the line and constraint of resources, it has not been found feasible to take up the project.

Lanjigarh Road-Junagarh Rail Link

2202. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress of work on Lanjigarh Road-Junagarh rail link project;

(b) the reasons for slow progress on the project, which was sanctioned way back in 1993-94; and

(c) the fresh steps taken to complete the project at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (c) In Phase I, work has been taken up from Lanjigarh Road to Bhavanipatna (31 km) where earthwork and bridge works are in progress. Railway are facing resource constraint. The work is being progressed as per availability of resources.

Biotechnological breakthroughs for medicines

2203. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any breakthroughs have been made in the field of biotechnology since January, 2001;

(b) if so, whether the same would help, in any manner, to produce cost-effective and safe medicines; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) to (c) The publication of genome sequences of 3.2 billion bases and around 31,000 genes (14,000 known and about 17,000 predicted genes) of human genome in February, 2001 has ushered in challenges in relation to understanding of functions of these genes, and using these to develop medically beneficial products. The era of genomics has opened opportunities to discover new drug targets. This would ultimately lead to development of novel drugs and therapies that will be cost effective and safe for diseases/disorders. The current therapy which is evidence based would be replaced by "customized" therapy and thus will be very specific.

The recent developments in stem cell biology have also opened new avenues for cell therapies to treat disorders like Parkinson's, cardio vascular disorders, diabetes, neurogenetic disorders, eye diseases, haemoglobionpathies etc. Globally, Biotechnology so far has had maximum impact on pharmaceutical industry and about 30 recombinant drugs are already in the market and about 300—400 products are under clinical trials.

Setting up of CORE

2204. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council has set up Centres of Relevance and Excellence (CORE) in different disciplines all over the country;

(b) if so, how many CORE have been set up so far in Karnataka, discipline-wise;

(c) whether a CORE has been established in Karnataka, for Disaster Management; and

(d) if not, whether in view of the drought and the earthquakes, Government would take steps to set up a CORE on Disaster Management in that State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY